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THE WORK OF THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON MATHEMATICAL REQUIREMENTS.

By J. W. Young, Chairman.

A preliminary report of the National Committee on Mathematical Requirements, covering the first meeting of the committee in Cambridge in September, 1916, was published in the American Mathematical Monthly, Volume 23 (October, 1916), page 283. Since that time the committee has held meetings in New York, December 28 and 29, 1916, and in Cleveland on September 3, 1917. Most of the work of the committee has, of course, been done by correspondence and through the individual efforts of members. Since the work undertaken by this committee should be of general interest to the members of the association, a brief account of the progress made is here given.

It will be recalled that the committee voted at its first meeting to request certain associations of teachers of mathematics to appoint representatives on the committee with special reference to its work relating to secondary schools. The associations in question complied with this request and as a result the original committee has been enlarged by the appointment of the following:

Mr. G. W. Evans, of the Charlestown High School, Charlestown, Mass., representing the Association of Teachers of Mathematics in New England.

Miss Vevia Blair, of New York City, representing the Association of Teachers of Mathematics in the Middle States and Maryland.

Mr. J. A. Foberg, of the Crane Technical High School, Chicago, Illinois, representing the Central Association of Science and Mathematics Teachers.

Furthermore, Professor E. L. Thorndike, of Columbia University, has consented to act in an advisory capacity for the committee on questions relating to psychology.

At the December, 1916, meeting it was decided to organize the work of the committee by subdividing this work into topics and making some one member of the committee responsible for a report on each topic. These topics and the members to whom they have been assigned are as follows:

Topic A: "The Valid Aims and Purposes of Mathematical Study"—Professor Young.

Topic B: "Recent Criticisms of Mathematics"—Professors Tyler and Smith.

Topic C: "Formal Discipline and the Transfer of Training"—Miss Blair.

Topic D: "Desirable Topics of Algebra and their Treatment"—Mr. Evans.

Topic E: "Scientific Investigations"—Professor Crathorne.

Topic F: "Questionnaires"—Professor Crathorne.

Topic G: "World Experience as to Mathematical Curricula and the Training of Teachers." This topic has not as yet been assigned.

The present state of the work on these topics is as follows:

Topic A.—A preliminary report on this topic has been submitted to Professor Young by Mr. J. A. Foberg. This report was drawn up by a sub-committee of a committee of the Central Association of Science and Mathematics Teachers. A discussion of this topic has also been secured at the request of Professor Young from Professor Hedrick. Certain other preliminary material is expected soon and it is hoped that a report may be made to the committee within the next few months.

Topic B.—Professors Tyler and Smith are coöperating on a report which, it is expected, will be ready some time in December.

Topic C.—Miss Blair submitted a report on her topic last summer and is now engaged in a revision and expansion of it with a view to early publication.

Topic E.—Professor Crathorne submitted an extensive summary of the results of recent scientific, statistical investigations relating to mathematical requirements last spring and submitted a second report during the summer, suggesting that the committee carry out certain specific investigations of its own. At its meeting in Cleveland last September it was decided to carry out the work suggested by Professor Crathorne. It is hoped that a detailed account of the nature of the proposed investigation can be published in an early number of the MONTHLY.

Topic G.—Responsibility for this topic will be assigned in the near future.

This indicates in broad outline the larger phases of the committee's work. Many matters of more special interest have been before the committee during the past year but hardly seem to call for comment here. It is hoped that further information concerning the work of the committee may be published as occasion arises in future numbers of the MONTHLY.

BOOK REVIEWS.

SEND ALL COMMUNICATIONS TO W. H. BUSSEY, University of Minnesota.

Introduction to the Calculus of Variations. By WILLIAM ELWOOD BYERLY. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1917. 48 pages.

Having just finished using this little book as a basis of instruction in a short course in advanced calculus given during the summer session, we venture to give expression to our sentiments regarding it.

In the first place, we believe that any book on an advanced mathematical topic may be called good for one or the other of two reasons: either it is good because of the depth and rigor of its scholarship or it is good from the fact that, though written quite regardless of the "fine points," it somehow meets very squarely the actual needs of the great majority of our advanced students as we find them in our ordinary American university classes to-day. It might seem that these two types should be the same, but they are not. It is of course highly desirable that we cultivate and produce books of the first or primarily scholarly